



PRESS RELEASE

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Into the Open

Ania Dabrowska and John Nassari

Four Corners Gallery

On **Thursday 3rd April 2008** Four Corners previews its spring exhibition.

Questions of the migrant, borders, and homeland persistently remain in sharp focus. Much of the debates in public, political, and media spheres have concentrated on issues of migrant and refugee numbers and on the question of asylum legitimacy. The emphasis has been on the notion that the nation state is inundated by waves of foreigners, described by the media in language, often historically associated with the mobilisation of war as if the UK was 'under attack'.

Rarely are the individual and personal narratives reflected upon – the challenge of negotiating cultures brought and cultures found or the question of what does understanding of displacement and cultural belonging mean for contemporary politics of identity and the current climate of global uncertainty.

Ania Dabrowska investigates a relation between construction of transnational identity and a notion of home in a search for belonging occupied with history and reinvention. Her work comprises of two photographic series and an installation.

You And I In Flux (2006-2007) is a series of portraits of first generation international migrants who live in London. Actions performed by them are not defined in terms of purpose, but as an emotional response of an individual to his or her understanding of a notion of home. *I Used To Skate On Frozen Lakes (2008)* investigates the connection between autobiographical and collective memory. The photographs are sequenced from an archive of the artist's back catalogue, each choice dictated by a memory brought up by a conversation with one of the people depicted in *You And I In Flux*. The artist sees sequencing "as putting the pictures in the present because of all that time has done to them since" (Minor White), and uses it to create secondary meanings simultaneously relating the images to new work as well as to each other.

Conversations (2008) installation plays seemingly contradictory roles of bridging the works and marking of a border between them. Exhibited transcripts contain stories of the portrait sitters. The act of remembering documented through them is considered a necessary part of crossing of physical and psychological borders. The installation is placed on an uncertain line dividing the past from the present.

In an interminable giving and taking Dabrowska's work reflects on possible forms of negotiation of different worlds and temporalities that influence our identity.

John Nassari's body of work, *'It's my home, even though I don't remember it'* explores Palestinian identity in official and unofficial camps in Lebanon.

For 60 years the Palestinians have been in exile, scattered across the Diasporas. His images reflect the lives of Palestinians across three generations, in which the material realities of long term camp life is rarely recorded with such dignity and beauty.

The work comprises of a series of larger-than-life-size portraits, exhibited alongside smaller images of close-ups and details of the subject's environments: alleyways, graffiti, objects and possessions. Nassari is interested in the politics of refugee representation and how ethnographers, historians and artists might respond to the challenge of representing embodied knowledge, memory and the senses.

Many of the people in Nassari's photographs have no direct memory of Palestine. Their parents' or grandparents' experiences and memories mediate their own memories – and yet a profound dedicated solidarity to the restoration of homeland and the right of return is dominate across the generations. John Nassari is interested in the question of second and third generation identity – which many of his subjects are, and how they see themselves as refugees and exiles.

The work is part of a larger series, which will be exhibited at the Palestine Gallery, a new contemporary arts centre, of which John is the curator. The Palestine Gallery opens in June 2008 and is the first Palestinian Gallery in Europe. The opening show will also feature new work commissioned from Ania Dabrowska.

For further information and images please contact Owen Thomas / Dave Than

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Notes to editor:

Dr John Nassari (b. 1970, UK) is an international artist and academic. He is Programme Leader for MA Refugee Studies at University of East London, and the Curator of the Palestine Gallery, London, and Director of PhotoInsight, an online art and theory website dedicated to issues in forced migration.

Ania Dabrowska (b. 1973, Poland) studied photography at Goldsmiths College (2001) and has an MA Photography from LCC, London University of the Arts (2007). Lives and works in London. Winner of the Observer Hodge Photographic Award (2003). Exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the UK, and published internationally. Currently working on a commission for the Palestine Gallery, London, developing collaborative project about brain donation (Wellcome Trust), and preparing for an exhibition of series of portraits NoBody's Perfect, selected for the National Portrait Gallery Photography Prize 2007. Visiting Lecturer, Goldsmiths College.

Into the Open runs from 4th April - .17th May 2008

Preview: Thursday 3rd April, 6.30pm – 9.00pm.

Artist talk: Thursday 1st May, 7.00pm – 8.30pm. Free admission.

Four Corners Gallery, 121 Roman Road, London E2 0QN
Opening times: Weds - Sat, 1pm – 6pm. Free admission.

Four Corners is a centre for still and moving image work, based in East London. The Arts and Education programme includes exhibitions, screenings, talks and events.

For further information visit www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk

